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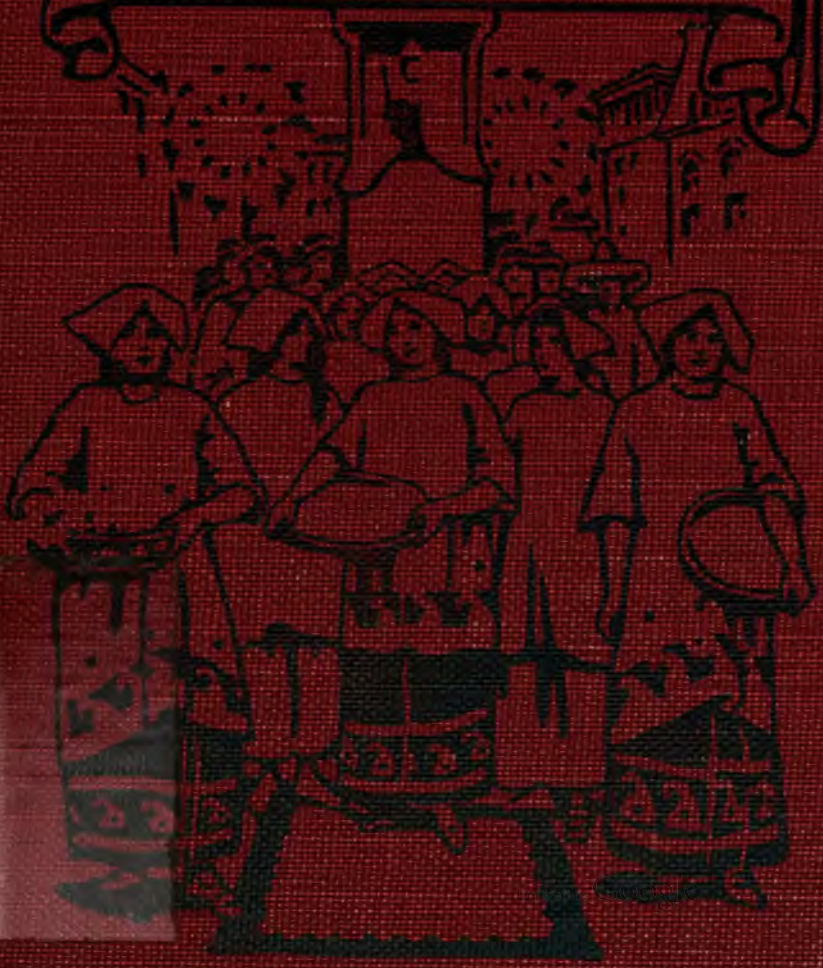
MERCEDES GODOY



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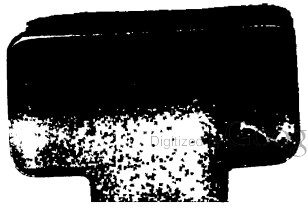

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El Arbol de la Noche Triste.

(The Tree of the Sad Night.)

It is supposed that under this tree the Spanish Conqueror Hernan Cortés wept after his withdrawal from Mexico City.

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WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN MEXICO

BY

MERCEDES GODOY

7

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WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN MEXICO

CHAPTER I

MY BIRTHPLACE

THERE is a fine street in Mexico City, formerly called "Calle del Angel" (Angel Street), and now named "Calle Isabel la Católica," after the renowned Queen Isabella of Spain. There at No. 2, which was a large stone house with the usual exterior balconies and interior court-yards of Mexican residences, I was born. This house was half a block from the National Library, the student's delight, and not far from the "Portales" or Arcades, which are full of toys and candy-stands, the children's delight.

Of course I know little about that

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house, or how I spent my babyhood there, as when I was a few weeks old we went to live in San Juan de Letran Street. We resided there several years. Opposite to this house was a fashionable church, Santa Brígida, where many weddings and christenings took place, though I was baptized at the grand Cathedral. Since then I have attended many marriage ceremonies in Mexican churches, and I can say that the altars and interior are always beautifully decorated with flowers and plants and the attendance is always large. These ceremonies generally take place in the mornings. At the christenings the godfather is usually pestered by the children who lustily cry after him, following his carriage, and asking for their "bolo," a small piece of money which it is customary to give to the little urchins.

As it is the custom in Mexico, I had my "nana," or nurse, though she was not very young, but rather old, who took me everywhere, even when accompanying

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my parents. These "nanas" are very faithful and obliging, and usually take great liking to the children under their care. This devotion is shown vividly when a child is sick, as the nurse will not leave it for one moment and is ever ready to attend to its wants. The love they bear to the children in their care continues when these children grow up, and in many families you may find "nanas" who keep their devotion and remain for many years attached to the household and to the young men or women whose wants they have attended to since babyhood. It is a pity that the type of such kind and devoted "nanas" is fast tending to disappear.

One of the defects that these "nanas" have is that they are in the habit of telling children ghost stories, which frequently terrify, and are apt to make the little ones at times nervous and restless. One of their favorite ways of intimidating the children is to tell them that the

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"coco" is coming. This "coco" is some imaginary being that is supposed to have for its sole purpose on earth the frightening and even punishing of bad children. But the principal ghost story that these "nanas" are very apt to tell the little ones under their charge is that of the "llorona" or weeping woman, who is supposed to be a female who is expiating some crime or grieving over some misfortune which has befallen her and is going around wailing, especially in the night-time and in very dark places. The story of the "llorona" is one that is very popular among the lower classes in Mexico; its origin is said by some to go as far back as the period when the Spaniards ruled in this country, and time does not seem to wipe out nor diminish the popularity of the superstitious fear of that wailing and weeping female ghost on the part of a great number of the more ignorant people and many of the children in all parts of the Republic.

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Every time I went back to Mexico City I used to pass by "Calle del Angel" and "Calle de San Juan de Letran," so that the house where I was born and that in which I spent my babyhood are indelibly impressed on my mind, and I shall always have vivid recollections of them.

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CHAPTER II

THE FIRST YEARS OF MY LIFE

It is a difficult task to relate the events of the first years of one's life, as in reality one has no recollection of those first years, when a tiny baby or child, but knows them only from hearsay and things told so many times by elders that gradually they seem really remembered and pictured most vividly in one's mind.

We resided at that time for several years in Mexico City. My brother who preceded me and the one who came after were both born in that city. My parents often made trips to the interior of the Republic and also to the United States, principally to San Francisco, where my mother's parents lived. I can remember

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vaguely the large house where my grandparents lived and where my mother and father were married. It had a pretty garden with flowers, which I loved to pick. I also liked to sit out there in the garden with my grandfather and listen to the stories that he told me. We went back there in later years several times, the last time being a few months before the terrible earthquake and fire of 1906 which nearly destroyed the whole city. They say it has changed very much and is greatly improved, though I liked it and admired it as it was before, with its hilly and busy commercial streets, and lovely residential sections and parks.

So it was that since a baby I have been traveling frequently and I have always enjoyed it, as it is most interesting and instructive. The defect one acquires is restlessness when remaining too long in the same place or city, missing the change of scenery, friends, and habits. Nevertheless traveling in different countries

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and visiting the various cities is very beneficial to the young and old, for in that way they become acquainted with other nationalities, customs, and languages, and see personally many interesting and historical places or things.

I was a very delicate baby and had intermittent fevers when about two years old, so the doctor prescribed a change of climate and my parents took me to Toluca, a pretty little town near the capital. From there we went to San Antonio, Texas, where my father was sent as Mexico's representative to the Exposition at that city. Of course I cannot remember anything about my stay in these places, but a few years later we revisited these two cities. Toluca is a very clean city and is high up on the mountains. The climate is colder than in Mexico City. All along the road from the capital the scenery is very picturesque and interesting, though not as beautiful as that of Vera Cruz, which I will describe in an-

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other chapter later on. The scenery of Toluca, however, is well worth seeing, especially for those who love nature's beauties. San Antonio, Texas, I found to be an attractive city. Being so near Mexico it is generally full of Mexican families, and we have seen several of our friends while there. The only drawback I found was the climate, as it seemed very hot most of the time.

When I was a little girl nearly all the children in Mexico, especially girls, went to private schools or had teachers at home, either because they considered that the public schools were deficient or because their parents did not care to have them mingle with the lower classes. The girls did not pursue studies that would fit them for any professional career, but no doubt this has changed lately, as women in Mexico, as in all parts of the world, are holding more positions and learning how to support themselves.

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Since then the public schools have improved and increased greatly, so that larger numbers of children of the well-to-do or middle classes attend them.

The Mexican public schools are similar to those in the United States, consisting of primaries, high schools or preparatory schools, and institutions to train students to become teachers, and members of other professions, as medicine, law, engineering, etc.

Here I may add that since I was a little girl, the most approved methods of teaching have been introduced and adopted, and at present some of the private educational institutions in Mexico can afford to children the same facilities that are given them in other countries. Still, owing to the desire of acquiring the English language and of training the children along active lines and pursuits, many of those who can afford to do so send their children to the United States, especially

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the boys for engineering and other scientific studies. Families residing in the States of Sonora, Sinaloa, and other Western States of Mexico are apt to send their children to educational institutions in California and the other Pacific Coast States, while those residing in other parts of the Republic send them for that purpose to New York, Massachusetts, and other parts of the United States, and some of them to the city of Washington. In this way the English language has been fostered in Mexico and children nowadays are taught English instead of French as in former years.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Mexican boys and girls is their liking for literature, and from an early age they show a fondness for reading books by ancient and modern authors of Spain, their mother country, as well as by English and French writers. A great many have read extensively the works of American authors, some of their favorites

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being Washington Irving, Prescott, Longfellow, and Poe, and one finds a great number of writers and poets, both young and old, in Mexico.

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CHAPTER III

AMUSEMENTS DURING CHILDHOOD

My favorite amusement when I was a little girl, and until I was in my teens, was to play with dolls, large and small, and even paper dolls. These I would cut out from fashion books and magazines, and some I had were made in Mexico of stiff paper or cardboard. My largest doll had lovely blond curly hair and porcelain hands, of which I was very proud. One day, however, while playing with it in our yard, one of my older brothers who was riding on his bicycle accidentally knocked both the doll and me down. This I remember grieved me very much, as the doll's head was broken in many pieces, and, as most children do, I cried so much that my mother had to buy another new head, which to me

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never seemed as pretty as the old one. My doll-house had a great assortment of furniture, some made by the Indians in Mexico. They make furniture in all sizes, also large and tiny dishes out of earthenware, and the prisoners make quaint toy furniture of quills and wood and put it together with pins. They also carve figures in cocoanuts, and from cherry and apricot stones they make tiny baskets and monkeys; all this is done with any ordinary penknife.

Other amusements of Mexican children which my brothers and I enjoyed were the same that are found here in the United States. We had hide-and-go-seek, blind man's buff, called "gallina ciega" (blind chicken), and kite-flying in the yard at home. This was for boys, still sometimes girls flew kites, too. I used to enjoy helping my brothers make them, that is pasting the tissue-paper on the frame or tying rags together to make the long tail.

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I also loved to read, though at that time having but a small number of attractive books in comparison with the great variety to be found in the United States. Of course the "Arabian Nights," "Robinson Crusoe," whose companion Friday is called in the Spanish version "Domingo" (Sunday), and other books, too, as the usual fairy tales, and stories of "Blue Beard," "Cinderella," etc., were popular among us Mexican children.

During rainy days I would read these books or play dominoes or checkers with my brothers, and on bright sunny days we went with our "nanas" to the parks or squares to hear the band play and I would roll a hoop, or jump rope, or amuse myself in some other active way. Very few baby-carriages were seen at these parks or on the streets, as the nurses always carried the babies in their arms. Servants were to be had at very low wages, so a father or mother was seldom seen carrying a baby. This was

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true even among people in moderate circumstances or of the middle classes, because they always had a nurse to attend to the children.

Another game that is so popular in the United States among schoolgirls, "Jackstones," is also played by Mexican children, both boys and girls, but there they use apricot stones instead.

A typical toy of Mexico is the "titere," which is like a marionette. This is a figure made of clay, its joints of rags, and dressed up to represent a man, woman, child, soldier, policeman, in fact all kinds of people. They are generally from six to ten inches high, although some that are used in the real "titere" theatres are quite large. These "titeres" have threads attached to their hands, feet, and body, and by pulling these threads one can manipulate them, so as to make them walk, dance, and jump about. My brothers had a toy theatre with scenery, and our servant

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boy or "mozo" amused us by making the "titeres" act, representing comical and dramatic acts and also musical ones. He would manipulate the strings from above and at the same time talk or sing, and the "titeres" appeared to us children as real actors and dancers. This would of course amuse us very much and keep us quiet for hours in our playroom.

Among other toys for girls, made by the Indians, are large and small stoves and dishes of earthenware, to imitate the ones used in Mexico. They also make very large and small dolls, all of rags, the features embroidered to show the eyes, mouth, nose, and ears. These dolls they usually dress up in Indian costumes of bright colors, and their hair, made out of black wool, they braid and leave hanging down their backs, as most Indian girls wear it. Children like these dolls, because they never break and can be thrown or dropped and nothing happens

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to them. They are indeed a practical doll, and some are very pretty and very well made.

At Cuernavaca, a pretty town not far from the city of Mexico, they make the smallest rag-dolls in the world. Some are only one-fourth of an inch in height, and the wonder is that being so tiny, every feature and all the different parts of the body are perfect and in proportion. They dress them up, and some costumes are very elaborate. A well-known woman who makes those dolls in Cuernavaca was getting blind from the strain on her eyesight, from making such very small dolls.

Another tiny toy or article made by Mexican Indians is a dressed-up flea. It does not seem possible, but it certainly is the truth, as we have several that we bought in Mexico. They have to be seen through a magnifying-glass to appreciate the work and patience it must take to prepare them. The dead fleas stand in

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tiny paper boxes, and are each dressed in various colors and styles.

Even when I was a little girl I was fond of going to the theatre, but the circus did not attract my attention as it did that of other children. I remember that I liked to go to the "Zarzuelas" or Spanish musical comedies, some of them being one-act plays, given at "tandas," which are performances that last about one hour, so that three or four can be given in one afternoon or evening. The Spanish music, which is very tuneful and catchy and is different from any other, has become very popular in Mexico. I must add that in my country there are very good musical composers, whom I have already referred to.

The children there like to sing the popular tunes or songs, some of which like "Los Enanos" (The Dwarfs), "El Butaquito" (The Little Stool) and others are by unknown authors, but very popular with all classes.

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CHAPTER IV

PRODUCTIONS OF MEXICO

Owing to the diversity of climates in various portions of the Republic, especially near the capital, there is a very large assortment of fruits and vegetables to be found for sale in the markets and fruit-stands at the capital. Some of these are little known in the United States, and when sold here bring high prices. I refer particularly to the fruits of tropical climates, which are so well liked by children in Mexico, such as the "tuna" (prickly pear), the "zapote" of various kinds, the "mamey" and the "aguacate" or alligator pear, so well known to foreigners. There is also a great variety of fruits from cold climates, like those found in the United States. The straw-

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berries are very large in size and very sweet.

On account of these varying climates, with which few countries are gifted, Mexico's agricultural productions are very numerous, and the same is true of minerals.

When I was a little girl, I remember very well that every one spoke of the great riches in minerals, especially gold and silver. Since then they have discovered and exploited, as is well known, numerous oil-wells which have given fabulous returns, especially around the districts of Tampico. Although I have never visited this port, still I have heard a great deal of talk about it, as it is my father's birthplace.

Among the productive industries in the central plateau where the city of Mexico is situated is the manufacture of "pulque," a national beverage made from the Mexican agave or century plant. It is rather largely sold in the capital

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and neighboring districts, and though it is highly intoxicating and consequently injurious, it is considered to have some medicinal properties, and therefore is used in very moderate quantities by some of the middle classes. Still, in the main it is as harmful as is whiskey in the United States, but it is said that large quantities of it have to be taken before a person is visibly affected by drinking it.

There are some cooling drinks of which both the children and adults are fond, and which are somewhat peculiar to the country, such as "orchata," made from the seeds of the canteloupe, and "chia," made from some typical seed of Mexico. These drinks are usually sold in stands to be found in the "Portales" in the Central Square, or "Zocalo," and along some thoroughfares, especially whenever some public festivity is to be held.

Although I have spoken already of the small industries, such as feather, silver, marble, wax, and rag articles made by

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the Indians and which prove so attractive to tourists, I must again make reference to the great merit and variety of the feather and silver work, some of which is exceedingly artistic and unique. Of course the smaller articles in the form of toys were those that attracted most the attention of the children, but as I grew up I came to appreciate the artistic value of the more pretentious and highly wrought pieces in these branches of industry. Not only are birds and animals represented by means of feathers artistically and realistically pasted and arranged on cards and plaques, but the Indian artists elaborate landscapes and views of buildings, all made up of feathers of different hues and colors, in this way making striking and artistic pictures, which command good prices.

As far as the filigree or silver work is concerned, I do not think there is any better or more artistic to be found, excepting in Italy, there being a striking

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similarity between some of the Mexican and some of the Italian silver filigree work.

Other articles made by the Indian women are all kinds of hand embroidery and drawn-work on linen, silk, and cotton. Some of this work is most exquisite and fine, made up in handkerchiefs, scarfs, collars, dresses, etc.

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CHAPTER V

PARKS, DRIVES, AND FLOWERS

THE principal park in the center of Mexico City is the "Alameda," extending several blocks in length and width. It is always green, full of flowers and trees, and has various fountains, the central one being very large and artistic. It was named "Alameda" because it originally consisted mostly of a large group of "alamos" or elm-trees.

There the children play, run, and amuse themselves, going with their "nanas" or nurses. It is always full of little ones, and every day my brothers and I went there to play with other little friends, being well taken care of by our "nanas." We used to love to buy balloons and play ball, jump, and run.

A few blocks away from the Alameda

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the beautiful drive "Paseo de la Reforma" begins, which leads to Chapultepec. For quite a number of blocks there are houses on either side of that driveway; some of the very wealthy families reside in splendid modern houses, almost palaces. The driveway is edged on both sides with trees and lovely flower-gardens, an automobile drive and bridle-path extending all the way to Chapultepec.

At the beginning of the Paseo de la Reforma is a very large bronze statue of Charles IV of Spain, which is considered a splendid work of art, the sculptor being a Mexican, Manuel Tolsa. Along the drive at intervals are several artistic and interesting monuments commemorative of important epochs of the history of Mexico.

The first one is that of Columbus on one of the principal circles. The great navigator appears standing in an imposing attitude, and around the lower

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pedestal of the monument are some of the men who aided him in his great enterprise. The second monument, also in the center of a circle, is that of Cuauhtemoc. He was the last Aztec ruler who struggled courageously against the Spanish conquerors. It is said that when he was being tortured with hot irons at his feet, to force him to say where the treasures were concealed, one of his companions who also was being tortured began to complain most piteously. Cuauhtemoc answering him bravely said, "Do you think that I am in a bed of roses?"

Nearing Chapultepec is the most imposing and artistic monument, which was unveiled during the Centennial celebrations in 1910. It is the monument of Independence, the design consisting of statues of Mexican heroes, with allegorical figures surrounding the base, while on the top of this high column is a huge Angel of Peace, covered with very

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fine gilt, which can be seen at a great distance. Another statue dedicated during these celebrations is at the Alameda, erected in memory of the great President Benito Juarez. The last three monuments and statues were made by different well-known Mexican sculptors, and are all of very original and artistic design.

I may add that also along the Paseo de la Reforma on either side are small statues, some of bronze, stone, or marble, placed on pedestals and representing some of the heroes of Mexican independence. They were erected by the governments of the States of the Republic, each of them having donated two of such statues.

The flower market "Mercado de Flores" is located at one end of the "Zocalo" or Central Square where the National Palace, Cathedral, and other public buildings are situated. It is always full of flowers in the mornings, but by afternoon they are mostly sold.

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These flowers are nearly all made up by the sellers into artistic shapes, as hearts, stars, moons, baskets, and also wreaths and crosses for the dead. These sellers know immediately who are foreigners and ask them very high prices, but if one offers them half or less in an insistent manner, they finally consent. Flowers are wonderfully beautiful, bountiful, and very cheap, if you know how to bargain with these venders.

On saints' days, commemorated by the church, especially on those of popular-named saints, and on All Souls' Day, the flower market is crowded and soon all the flowers are sold.

The "portales" or arcades on the other side of the Zocalo are, as I said before, full of stands with fruit, cakes, candies, candied fruit, specialties of the country, and all kinds of toys, mostly cheap ones. All of us children used to love to go to these portales and buy toys of various kinds.

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The suburbs are interesting to visit, as they are very typical. The houses generally are surrounded by gardens, or are of the old Spanish architecture with interior court-yards and iron-barred windows. Some are very large and handsome and are like the country homes of many people living in the city. They go to the suburbs to spend several months during the year. Other people live there all the time, and there are many less pretentious houses, and still some very small ones of the lower classes or Indians.

Among the suburbs of Mexico City are Mixcoac, Tacubaya, Tacuba, and San Angel. At Tacuba stands the historic "Arbol de la Noche Triste" (Tree of the Sad Night), where it is said that Cortés wept on the night he had to leave Mexico City, after being driven away with great slaughter by the Aztecs. The tree is surrounded by an iron fence and has an appropriate inscription.

At San Angel there is a well-known

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club or inn, "San Angel Inn," where many go to dine and spend many pleasant hours. Once I went there to a large luncheon party and afterwards we danced until late that evening. We also walked around the lovely garden of this club and went sight-seeing around the town.

The Peñon is a near-by resort or suburb and is very picturesque. There is a hotel and bathing establishment there, which at times is very well patronized, not only by the residents of Mexico City but by foreigners. The springs at this place are noted for their medicinal qualities.

Another important and interesting suburb is Guadalupe. The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Mexico. There is a well-known legend about her apparition. It is said that she appeared to an Indian, Juan Diego, who terribly frightened ran to tell it to the bishop, who of course did not believe him. The Indian then returned for the second time to the same spot and the Virgin appeared

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again, and told him that this time the bishop would believe him. Her imprint was made on his cloak or "ayate." The bishop was then convinced, and as Juan Diego told him that the Virgin wanted a church erected on the spot where she appeared, a beautiful shrine was built, which now has been enlarged and is one of the best churches in the Republic. Its altar railings are of solid silver and it contains many other costly ornaments.

Near this church is a well, the water of which is said to cure some diseases, and many people, mostly Indians, fill jars and bottles which they take home to use as a remedy. On a hill there is a small house, the walls of which are all covered with pieces of broken glass, of all colors, shapes, and sizes, making it look very quaint. On top of the hill is a cemetery where many of Mexico's illustrious men have been buried. Below in the square near the church may be seen many Indian women making and selling tiny

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"tortillas" or cakes, made of ground fresh corn, which they grind in a "metate" made of stone with three stone supports and having a handle likewise made of stone. We children used to love to buy and eat the tortillas while still warm.

Guadalupe is seldom omitted by the sight-seers as its legend and church are well known all over the country, and for this reason it is greatly visited by people of all classes and nationalities. I have several medals with the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe as well as souvenirs and photographs of the various places of interest, all these being very much sought by the sight-seers or tourists.

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CHAPTER VI

SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

SUNDAYS and holidays are very lively and enjoyable in Mexico. They are the days of amusement and recreation for all classes.

In the city of Mexico at the Alameda, the park I mentioned in the preceding chapter, where so many children are to be seen at play, is also crowded by elder people on these days.

A military band plays in the morning until noon, and people promenade up and down along the principal pathway. This is covered with an awning to keep off the sun, and chairs are placed on either side, being obtained by paying a small amount. Those more fortunate ones who have automobiles or carriages

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drive up and down San Francisco Street a regular parade, upon returning from the Paseo and Chapultepec. The women wear expensive and elaborate gowns and hats, a great many of which are imported from Europe, showing them off in this slow parade. Only three rows of vehicles can pass, as this is not one of the wide streets of Mexico City.

In Chapultepec crowds are seen, morning and afternoon, driving, walking, or sitting on the benches along the sidewalk, listening to the lively music, as at each end there is generally a band playing. The afternoon crowds are naturally the larger. One always meets many friends, in fact those who live in that city permanently are kept busy bowing to their numerous acquaintances.

Carriages are becoming scarce, for here, as in all countries of the world, the automobiles are taking their place; but when they were still numerous it was said that the horses in Mexico City were

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indeed among the best and most splendid-looking to be seen in any of the important cities of the world.

The lake situated in Chapultepec is likewise full of pleasure-seekers in boats and canoes, more so on Sundays and holidays. Once we got up a party of quite a number of girls and boys and went to this lake to row very early in the morning at daybreak, as the sun is very hot and burns greatly later on. Even then after rowing for several hours, we became sunburnt and heated. One feels it the more perhaps, because, strange to say, the shady sides of the streets or drives are quite cool, sometimes even cold. So in winter if one is chilly the best way to get nice and warm is to stand or sit in the sun for some time, if the house has no furnace or fireplaces, which few houses or buildings have, as they are seldom needed. The winters are not severe as in the northern part of the Republic; it almost never snows, though once it did and this

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created a great sensation and excitement among the population, especially those who never in their lives had seen it snow. It was only a slight snowfall and did not remain on the ground, but soon melted away; nevertheless it frightened many Indians.

The holidays commemorating the different saints are not legal holidays, so that public offices and stores remain open on such occasions; still the churches observe them, and also many families and even some business houses. Some of the principal holidays are those of St. Joseph, St. Francis, Virgin of Guadalupe, and the Immaculate Conception. Every one celebrates his saint's day instead of his birthday, and as these days are always well known by friends, it is the custom to send presents and flowers at such times, and we children received toys and other gifts.

Each city district has its patron saint, for whom the church in that locality is

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usually named. The day of this saint is celebrated by illuminating the streets and giving open-air concerts in the parks of that district, and stands are also erected on the streets where sweetmeats, cakes, fruit, and toys are sold.

The principal and largest church in Mexico City is the Cathedral, situated, as I said before, on one side of the "Zocalo" or Central Square. It is a very handsome and costly one, and has two very high towers and a cupola in the center, and was built several hundred years ago in the time of the Spaniards, but since then has been enlarged. It contains many altars and is divided into several sections in the interior. Of course on Sundays and holidays it holds more people than any other, being the largest and most important. Palm Sunday, which is well known, is the one preceding Easter, is duly solemnized in México City, and the number of palms that on that day are blessed at the leading churches,

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especially at the Cathedral, is very great indeed.

Each child generally buys a palm and carries it to church on that day, and many children bring their palms home afterwards, where they fasten them to some balcony or window in the house, as the palm is supposed by some to bring good luck to the spot where it may be placed. Some of the palms are very artistically woven and braided in various designs, the Indians showing a great deal of skill in preparing highly ornamented palms for sale on the streets on Palm Sunday.

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CHAPTER VII

HOLY WEEK, CORPUS CHRISTI, ST. JOHN'S DAY, AND MEXICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

THE church processions around the streets of the city during Holy Week which are held in some of the Latin-American countries were abandoned many years ago in Mexico, so I have never seen any there, but I did see them in Guatemala. Nevertheless that week is a very busy one in all parts of Mexico for Catholic church-goers. Thursday is the day to visit the altars at the different churches. These are beautifully ornamented with flowers and plants and lighted by hundreds of candles and electric lights. As flowers are so cheap and bountiful there, it is easy to secure great quantities of them. Thousands of people are seen going in and out of these

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churches all day long, and in reality some of the altars or temples are so artistically and prettily arranged that they are wondrously beautiful.

Good Friday is a solemn day; in former years no carriages or any kind of vehicles were allowed on the streets. This is not the case at present, still even now very few persons will play the piano or go to the theatre or to a party on this day.

On Holy Saturday in the morning at ten o'clock the burning of "Judas" takes place. This custom is observed a great deal, and more so in Mexico City than elsewhere. Toys made of cardboard representing men and animals, and having firecrackers fastened to them, are sold in great quantities to children, who suspend these figures in the court-yards or corridors of their homes. At the stroke of ten, when the church-bells are heard, the children light and burn them. In some streets the laboring classes hang up

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large figures, sometimes even six or seven feet high, made of straw or rags and dressed to represent men. These also contain firecrackers and have fireworks attached to them. It is needless to say that there is a deafening noise when the burning of "Judas" occurs, something which we when children used so much to enjoy seeing and hearing. This well-known custom of burning Judas is supposed to be done as a reminder and condemnation of the betrayal of Our Lord the Saviour by Judas, an apostle and one of His companions.

Easter is gay, and all the drives and streets are crowded with pleasure-seekers, also all the theatres and places of amusements.

"Corpus Day" is another festivity in which we young people used to take much interest. The religious ceremonies on that day are elaborate; the parks and drives, as on other holidays, are full of people, promenading and enjoying them-

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selves, while everywhere toy-sellers are seen, and more than ever fruit-venders are plying their trade. On that day little "huacales" are sold. These are little boxes or crates made out of pieces of sticks, leaves, and greens, filled with fruits of the season. These "huacales" are sometimes quite expensive, when they contain choice fruits, but usually the majority are cheap and a child can with a few cents buy his "huacal."

"Dia de Muertos" (All Souls' Day) is greatly observed in Mexico City by persons visiting the cemeteries and decorating the graves of departed relatives or friends with beautiful wreaths and flowers. The resting-places of the dead are crowded, all the tramways that lead to the different cemeteries are full of passengers all day long, coming and going. During the day preceding and the day after, as well as "Dia de Muertos," booths are erected, sometimes near the Zocalo or Alameda, where peculiar toys and sweet-

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meats are sold in shapes of skulls, tombs, etc., all of funereal aspect, but which strange to say do not frighten the children, who buy these queer toys and take home to play with them. A bread is also sold called "pan de muerto" (dead man's bread), made into these weird shapes.

At every theatre the drama, "Don Juan Tenorio," is given for a few days around All Souls' Day and also on that particular day. The play is in verse and written by Zorrilla, a well-known Spanish author. It is a weird and allegorical play, describing a young man whose great reputation for his numerous successful love affairs and duels was known everywhere. Suddenly he falls really in love with Doña Ines. This girl is sent to a convent, to become a nun, by her father, so that Don Juan cannot pursue her, but the insistent lover manages to send her letters full of his great devotion and finally carries her off, even though a nun,

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to a castle by the sea. He has duels with her father, brother, and others, killing them all, and from grief Doña Ines dies. He visits her tomb, and there while praying for her and God's forgiveness, the ghosts of all those he killed appear and demand his condemnation. The spirit of Doña Ines prays for his pardon and they are reunited finally in heaven and Paradise. The verses are beautiful in sweetness and originality. This play is given every year in nearly every Latin-American country and Spain during "Dia de Muertos," so that it is considered one of the most popular and well-known plays in Spanish-speaking cities. Perhaps "Don Juan Tenorio" has been given more than any other play in the world. In these countries the name "Tenorio" is greatly used, being often applied to the men who have many love affairs.

Our greatest national holiday is the Sixteenth of September, Mexico's Inde-

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pendence Day, our "Fourth of July." It is a most eventful and greatly celebrated day. On the fifteenth, at eleven o'clock at night, which is supposed to begin that joyous celebration, the President, who is at the National Palace, generally giving a grand reception, appears at the stroke of eleven and rings the liberty bell and exclaims: "Viva Mexico!" (Long Live Mexico!). At that moment cannons, whistles, bells, clapping, and shouts are heard on all sides, and the military bands play the National Anthem. All the public buildings, the Cathedral, and the streets around the Zocalo are also suddenly illuminated by thousands of electric lights in green, white, and red, our national colors.

This large square and the streets surrounding it are crowded to their full capacity, the people's voices and applause thrill the air with excitement and enthusiasm, showing their great love for their country and true patriotism. On

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the morning of the sixteenth a grand parade takes place, lasting several hours; the infantry, cavalry, artillery, and our famous "Rurales" take part and are reviewed by the President from the National Palace balconies.

Our frequent trips to Mexico were generally around this month, which was my favorite on account of being able to witness this enthusiastic celebration. I may say that I have seen it several times from the balconies of the National Palace.

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CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTMAS TIME

THE Christmas tree, the children's delight in the United States, is sometimes used in Mexico, but the "nacimiento," or birth of Christ, is the typical Christmas amusement for the Mexican children.

The figures of the child Jesus, the three Kings, St. Joseph, the Virgin, shepherds, and animals are made by the Indians in clay or wax, painted in brilliant colors. These are placed on a table or platform where a representation of the stable at Bethlehem is arranged, with moss and green to simulate hills, trees, and roads, while by using mirrors, lakes or ponds are shown. Scattered here and there are tiny houses, huts, and the shepherds and animals, the whole being illuminated with candles or electric lights.

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Some of these "nacimientos" are very artistic and elaborate, and are really worth seeing.

The "posadas" are evening parties given for a period of nine days at different friends' houses, the last being on Christmas day. When the invited guests meet at the house where the "posada" is held, they go in a procession accompanied with music, singing and carrying the child Jesus, as if they were asking for *posada* or lodging for it. Another group is stationed at one of the parlors and behind closed doors. They also sing some hymns and after a time the door is opened, and those seeking the posada are admitted. After this there is dancing and supper is served. A tray is also passed around with pretty souvenirs filled with candies for each guest, this being a feature of the "posada." Sometimes a "piñata" is broken. This is an earthen jar decorated with tissue-paper in all colors and shapes and filled with

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candies, nuts, and all kinds of sweetmeats. Each person or child in turn is blindfolded and with a stick tries to break this "piñata," but many times they miss it, or lose their way and go in another direction, so the rest have to run and get out of their way, or surely they would get a good hit on their head or body. When finally some one breaks the piñata, all rush and shout and try to get most of the candies and other things, these being quickly picked up from the floor by all participants. This amusement is nearly always used in all children's parties and I remember that I enjoyed it very much for its good fun.

Perhaps it is unnecessary for me to say that on Christmas eve the churches are crowded with people who go to the midnight mass, as is the case among the Catholics in the United States. In some instances there is a family gathering at the homes of those who have been present at the midnight mass, but of course

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while a child I had to forego this on account of the lateness of the hour when it was given. Furthermore these reunions are usually only for older persons.

Presents are given on New Year's Day to the grown-up persons and toys and other gifts to the children on Kings' Day, January sixth. The Kings are the Mexican Santa Claus and are supposed to bring toys to the little ones. On that day a party is given for children, a large cake being placed on the table, in the center of all the other sweetmeats. This special cake contains a bean, and if a girl gets it she is the queen and selects a king from among the boys present, while if, on the other hand, the bean falls to a boy, he chooses the queen, and I was that lucky person at one of these parties that I attended. The king is supposed to give a few days later a party or picnic to all those who had attended, so of course we children loved this party, as in reality it meant two parties.

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Whenever we were in the United States we had our Christmas tree and Santa Claus would always fill our stockings, so I know both Christmas celebrations, Mexican and American, and like them both immensely.

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CHAPTER IX

THE STREETS IN MEXICO CITY

THE business section of Mexico City is in the old part of the town and most of the streets are somewhat narrow, although the avenues of Cinco de Mayo and Avenida Juarez and others are unusually wide.

Many old buildings dating back to the time of the Spaniards still exist, but a great many important and modern ones have been built lately. During the Centennial celebrations in 1910, several buildings, hospitals, asylums, etc., were opened. The new Post Office is a very handsome one, the interior being mostly of marble, and was built in recent years, and the National Theatre will be one of the best and most costly in America.

The National Museum in the city of Mexico is well worth seeing, and I re-

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member that when a little girl I visited it several times and saw many other children there, too. A great many relics and antiquities are to be seen there and are most interesting, dating back hundreds of years to the time of the Aztecs, before the Conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortés, also some from during the Spanish dominion.

The Aztec Calendar is well known all over the Republic. It is a large round stone with carvings of Aztec designs, and is supposed to be the calendar of those ancient times. Numerous other carved stones and antiquities are also seen there. Another notable relic is what is known as the Sacrificial Stone, being a huge round and weighty slab with carvings on the upper portion and on the sides, and with a round cavity on top where it was said that the heart of the victim to be sacrificed was cut out of the body, the blood being allowed to flow along a duct carved out in the stone. We children

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used to look at that stone with fright and horror. What attracted most the attention of us young people were the toys used by the Aztec children and which are also on exhibition in the National Museum.

The Indians are descendants of the Aztecs and in these modern times are very skilful in carving, and making curiosities of all kinds.

Perhaps it may not be out of place to say that there is a very good Academy of Fine Arts in Mexico City. It is called the San Carlos National Academy. I visited it several times when I was a little girl and although at that time I could not appreciate the meritorious works of art, mostly paintings, that it contains, I always was particularly pleased to look at the many fine pictures to be seen at that institution, especially those referring to Mexican historical events.

The new section of "colonias," the

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residential part of the city, is very attractive. It has small parks or circles at intervals and trees all along the sidewalks. The houses are generally surrounded by gardens and many are enclosed by high iron fences. The architecture is very modern and the houses have all the comforts necessary in the interior. Some of these houses are beautiful and large, others smaller but all in quaint, artistic, and original styles.

We lived at Avenida Prim, "Colonia Juarez," for several months in 1903, coming from Guatemala to visit our native land. The house was very attractive in the style of a bungalow and had a lovely garden with vines and flowers, also a stable in the rear, all enclosed by a high elaborate iron fence. It was prettily and comfortably furnished and the owners even rented to us their horses and carriage. Nearly every afternoon I took a drive with my parents, brothers, or little sister, and in the morn-

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ings took lessons in Spanish, English, and French, and on the piano, with private teachers at home. After we left this house it was taken by the Spanish Minister.

Most of the streets in "Colonia Juarez" have names of European cities and those of "Colonia Roma" adjoining the former, the names of leading cities and states of the Republic. In the old part of the city some streets have odd and queer names, such as "Las Ratas" (The Rats); "El Indio Triste" (The Sad Indian); "El Zapo" (The Frog); others had names of popular heroes and events of Mexican history, these being Avenida Juarez, after the great President Benito Juarez, which is on one side of the Alameda; Avenida Cinco de Mayo, which commemorates a battle won by the Mexicans; Avenida de la Independencia (Avenue of Independence), and those of illustrious men, as Guerrero, Morelos, and many others.

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The legend connected with the street "Don Juan Manuel" is quite peculiar. It seems that during the administration of one of the Viceroys, several murders were committed in that street, and what seemed strange was that the bloody deeds should take place near midnight. Many people were suspected, and as at that time the police was not of the best, and several persons were murdered before the guilty one was discovered. At last the crimes were proved to be the deeds of a very rich though somewhat eccentric man, popularly known as Don Juan Manuel, who lived in that street. It seems that he would stay on the sidewalk near his house, and when a passer-by would ask him the time, he would tell the exact hour, adding, "You are fortunate to know the hour when you are to die," and thereupon stab him to death. This legend of Don Juan Manuel was quite well known by many children, and some of the younger ones were even

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afraid to pass through Don Juan Manuel Street.

The avenues in time of the Aztecs were canals and had bridges from one side of the street to the other. Where these bridges existed the streets were called until recently "Puente (bridge) de San Francisco"; "Puente (bridge) de Alvarado," etc. At the latter it is said that Pedro de Alvarado, who was second in command to Hernán Cortés, during the conquest, leaped by means of his lance from one side of the canal to the other and thus escaped from the threatening Aztecs. Of course this street seems really too wide to permit a feat of that kind, still the legend is one of the most popular and best known.

Lately a great many of the names of the streets have been changed, so no doubt whenever I go back there, I shall find many new names and will have to get acquainted with them in order not to get lost. In some respects it must be a

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great advantage over the old names, as formerly, in point of fact, many persons could not locate some streets, because in some parts of the city (the old section) every block had a different name.

The city has a good tramway system, most of the lines starting from the large Central Square or Zocalo. The electric street-cars that go to the suburbs are of two kinds, first and second class, the latter being cheaper and only patronized by the poorer classes. Those cars are quite crowded in the mornings, at noon, and in the evenings on week days, and they are jammed on holidays and Sundays.

Hacks and taxis are quite reasonable in their fares, but there is always a tip to give to the coachman or chauffeur. Needless to say, when I was a little girl, there were no taxis in Mexico City, the means of public conveyance being carriages of three kinds, bearing little flags in white, red, and blue, according to the charge to

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be made. The white marked the cheapest carriages, very bad-appearing and with poor horses, while those having the red ones were quite fair, and those with the blue flags were the best. As soon as a carriage was occupied the little colored flag was lowered, thus indicating that the vehicle had been taken.

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CHAPTER X

BEAUTIFUL CHAPULTEPEC

THE beautiful castle of Chapultepec is situated away up on a hill, a most picturesque sight. It is surrounded by trees and all kinds of green foliage, and below are woods with winding paths, parks, and a lake where many canoes glide about with merry people.

Chapultepec Park is the principal drive of Mexico City and is always well filled with automobiles, carriages and people promenading; especially on Sundays, Thursdays and holidays, it is crowded. One or two bands play on these days at the different band-stands.

One can enter Chapultepec castle either by ascending on an elevator or by walk-

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ing or driving up a winding path. Close to it is the Military Academy, which is most interesting to visit. The cadets of this Academy are the pride of the Mexican people; they are our West Point Cadets. They drill there in a large court-yard at specified hours, and can be seen drilling by persons who wish to watch them from the castle.

The scenery from away up there is wonderful, as one sees far below and at a short distance Mexico City with all its splendors, high church towers, old Spanish and modern architecture in public buildings and dwellings, also the snow-covered peaks of the two volcanoes Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, which appear to be quite near. It is said that when General Grant visited this spot, during his trip around the world, he stated that the view from the balconies of Chapultepec castle was one of the most enchanting in the world.

Many times I visited this historic place

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with my mother to call on Mrs. Diaz, wife of President Porfirio Diaz. They generally resided there in the summer months. She is a most gracious and distinguished lady, speaks several languages and was always very amiable and kind to every one, rich or poor. She showed us nearly all the castle, the different luxurious reception-rooms, parlors, gardens, and terraces. One terrace is enclosed in beautiful colored glass in artistic designs of figures and landscapes. Here we had tea and enjoyed her charming hospitality many times.

Around the forest below, surrounding and near Chapultepec castle are immense trees called "ahuehuetes," that are said to have been planted by the Aztecs, several hundred years ago. From these trees, which are very high, a peculiar

long strings hangs from the

This moss is generally used to

the "nacimientos" on Christ-

ich I refer elsewhere.

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Along the hill that leads to the castle is a basin or small pond which is said to have been used by Montezuma, Emperor of the Aztecs, as his bathing-place. In another direction, but still on the hill, one can see the monument erected to the memory of some of the cadets who died defending the castle, during the war with the United States.

Chapultepec Park is well kept, and efficient guards are stationed at different places where the many carriages and automobiles might endanger the safety of the large crowds of people on Sundays and holidays. Not far from the hill below there is a restaurant, which is well patronized. This restaurant is an attractive building situated by itself near the main driveway. It has terraces all around, some being enclosed by glass, where many tables are placed, but the principal dining-rooms are in the interior. On these special days it is unusually thronged, and gay with music.

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A great many of the banquets given during the Pan-American Conference and Centennial celebrations were held at this restaurant.

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CHAPTER XI

THE FLOATING GARDENS AND VIGA CANAL

THE Viga Canal is unusually picturesque and quaint, extending many miles. On both sides are trees, flowers, shrubs, and greens of all descriptions, also small villages now and then.

On feast days and holidays, especially on the Friday (Viernes de Dolores) preceding Holy Week it is at its best, crowded with canoes, row-boats and steam-launches, gayly decorated with flowers, green foliage and flags. Here the people of all classes, rich and poor, enjoy picnics, or "dias de campo" to their hearts' content. The quaint old-fashioned canoe is very large, with a flat bottom, and holds a large number of persons.

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I always recall one very pleasant and enjoyable picnic I attended there. We were over fifty girls and boys, also a few chaperones, a thing that is indispensable in Latin-American countries. Our two canoes (the old-fashioned kind) were prettily decorated with flowers and greens, and at one end of each canoe sat several musicians playing lively airs, while we glided smoothly down the canal. As we reached the floating gardens, we stopped long enough to admire these wonders of nature. The flowers grow in the water and one sees them peeping up, some with long stems rising from the water, with scarcely any earth or roots to be seen.

A short distance farther there is a spot called "Ojo de Agua," where the water is so clear that you can see the bottom, away down many feet in depth. Upon throwing a coin, you can see it distinctly when it reaches the bottom.

All along the Viga Canal there are

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little Indian villages, where the poor people raise flowers and vegetables which they take in their canoes to Mexico City to sell at various markets, and at the landing-place. It is interesting to visit these villages, especially on occasions when some religious or other festivity is being held.

There are also on both sides of the canal scattered here and there rustic summer-houses with benches for the picnickers. We could not find one large enough for our party, so we decided to leave our canoes and wander on land, until we found a suitable and favored spot. Here we spread the cloths and laid the good things to eat, every one being rather hungry. There we ate, talked, laughed, and took pictures, all being in a very merry mood, and then returned to our canoes. When we reached the landing-place all were in the dancing spirit, so the whole party took the trolley-cars to the Country Club, an up-to-date and

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important club where Americans, English, Mexicans, and all nationalities assemble to dance, play tennis, golf, etc. This club is situated a short distance from the city and is very attractive. We danced until late that evening and returned to Mexico City and our homes with very pleasant and enjoyable memories of our "dia de campo" spent along the Viga Canal.

At the end of the Canal is Xochimilco, a typical Indian village much larger than the rest, and where most of the flowers are brought from to sell at the Mercado de Flores (Flower market) and other places in Mexico City. At this locality some new water-works have been established which furnish some of the water to the capital.

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CHAPTER XII

BY RAIL IN MEXICO

One of the wonders of nature and engineering is the railway from Vera Cruz (one of Mexico's ports on the Gulf of Mexico) to Mexico City, the capital of the Republic.

One leaves Vera Cruz early in the morning, in a tropical climate, and gradually ascends, on a winding track up hills and mountains, with frequent precipices in sight, until Mexico City is reached, twelve hours later. The capital is 7,500 feet above sea level, so you find a decided change of temperature, in fact you feel quite cold after experiencing the heat of Vera Cruz. On this account it is advisable to go prepared with wraps for your arrival.

The scenery is magnificent all along,

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vegetation of all descriptions, such as the cactus, maguey, etc., typical of Mexican soil. Beautiful valleys far, far below are to be seen, and especially from a very high peak one beholds the quaint old town of Maltrata, which at such great distance looks like toyland, enchanted with moving figures, well-laid streets, and odd low dwellings. Many mountain-peaks covered with snow are also to be seen and nearing Mexico City, the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl. All these wonderful scenes are in the highest degree inspiring to the painter.

The engineering of that road was a very difficult task. One imagines at times that the train will turn over into one of those deep precipices, as there are so many sharp curves and barely space on the road-bed for trains to pass. Some accidents have occurred, but on rare occasions.

Another interesting sight is the arriving at every station. Indian men,

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women, and children are awaiting the trains to sell through the car windows to the passengers, drawn-work, potteries, fruits, and all kinds of Mexican curiosities. At one of these stations, the town being well known for its plentiful gardenias, they sell them arranged inside of the stalk of the banana, which preserves and keeps them fresh for many days. These gardenias in the United States are among the most expensive and rare flowers, while in Mexico they are very abundant and very cheap.

The port of Vera Cruz is quite an important one of the Republic, as great quantities of imports and exports are brought and taken from here to Europe, Cuba, and the United States, although to the latter a great portion goes by land. The city is quaint and very clean, with well-paved streets and good drainage. Hardly a case of yellow fever is ever reported now, but it is quite warm all the year around, as are all tropical places.

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The park or square in the center of the city is where most of the hotels and shops are located, these buildings having arcades. At the restaurants and cafés tables are placed right on the sidewalks and on these arcades, leaving only room enough for the pedestrians. It is much cooler to dine or take refreshments out there, and at night the sea-breeze is felt and is much welcomed.

During the afternoons and evenings the band plays at that square and it gets filled with people, who promenade or sit on the benches to listen to the music. An odd sight to be seen there, just as the sun goes down, is hundreds of black birds flying about and perching all along the telegraph wires that are around this park. They remain there all night, to fly away, no one knows where, at daybreak, and return again that same evening.

Although we remained in Vera Cruz but a day or a few hours at a time on

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our various trips from Habana to Mexico City, still I saw most of the city and surroundings. The Naval Academy is located at this port. This we visited, and were shown around by some of the officers we met on the gunboats *Zaragoza* and *Yucatan* that stopped at the port of Habana while we were there. It was very interesting to visit that Naval Academy and see the splendid discipline these cadets receive.

Among the cities which I have visited in the interior of the Republic, are Guadalajara, the second largest in Mexico, the capital, Mexico City, being the first and most important. All the best pottery curiosities are made in Guadalajara. The Indians make figures, statues, dishes, and ornaments of pottery or earthenware in attractive designs and painted in appropriate colors; they also make from this material statues and busts, copied from the original or photographs in exact likeness. The city has

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many fine buildings, houses, and well-paved streets. The third in importance and population is Puebla, called the city of churches, owing to the numerous and especially beautiful ones that it has. It is also an attractive city, and from here most of the onyx comes in various colors and shades. The Indians who have such a knack and taste for making curiosities carve the onyx into various shapes and designs, imitating fruits, vegetables, etc.

We traveled by land many times, going or coming from Mexico City to the United States, going on the Mexican Central railroad and passing through El Paso, and Eagle Pass on the American side, both border cities. Other towns of Mexico that I remember passing were Queretaro, where Archduke Maximilian was shot. His luxurious gilt coach is now in the National Museum; I saw it when visiting that interesting museum at Mexico City. Most of the opals come from Queretaro and as one reaches that

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station many Indians are to be seen selling them. The passengers sometimes buy expensive and genuine opals very cheaply from these venders. We also passed by Chihuahua, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas, the last two being mining towns. Zacatecas is very hilly and picturesque; it has so many ups and downs that there is a tramway that goes to Guadalupe, a small town below, the cars going by themselves down this steep hill.

In Guanajuato there is a very large and beautiful theatre, that was erected not so very many years ago. The "presas" or reservoirs which provide water for the city are noteworthy, and owing to the hilly condition of the country around there, are highly picturesque. At Guanajuato and Zacatecas we visited the mines and reduction works, but as I was a very small girl when we went there, I can scarcely remember anything of my visits to those places.

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CHAPTER XIII

IN GUATEMALA, AND BACK TO MEXICO

We lived in Guatemala on two occasions, my father being sent there both times as Mexican Minister; once years ago when I was a little child, remaining over two years. I scarcely remember anything, only our splendid large house with interior court-yards, gardens, stables, etc., also some of the children, who on my second visit there became my close friends, recalling vaguely that we had known each other when very small.

Guatemala brings back to me pleasant recollections of good times, and good friends. The people are very hospitable and show in many ways their fondness for one. On saints' days, feasts, or departures they always remember one by sending flowers, candies, or other gifts.

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The city was of a decided old Spanish architecture with low houses, not more than two stories high. The roofs were of red tiles, and the lower windows had iron bars, through which many a lover spoke to or serenaded his "novia" (sweetheart). There are two lovely drives, the "Paseo de la Reforma" and the "Hipodromo." At the latter there is a fair-week for horse-racing during the month of August. Three days are selected for the races, and crowds of people go to witness them. Sometimes races for the benefit of some benevolent institution are given, when those who take part in them are young men well known in social circles. I recall well enough how in one of those races, my brothers rode their own horses, and how frightened I was fearing that some accident might happen to them. Fortunately nothing disagreeable occurred, and I was even glad to see that they won some of the races and received prizes.

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At the Hipodromo the festivities of Minerva, so called, would also take place. Then all the children of the public and private schools took part in the exercises held, which were very interesting, and prizes were given to the most deserving. While in Guatemala I continued my studies at home with private teachers.

The Colon theatre is very large and attractive, where all the élite meet. Many go, if the company of artists is not of the best, as if to a social gathering. It is the custom here, as in Mexico and in nearly all the Latin-American countries, to have the intermissions very long, and in that way allow the audience to exchange visits at the different boxes and chat with the ladies and the girls with the "novios" (sweethearts). There is also a foyer at that theatre, where the young people meet during the intermissions.

There is a bull-ring in Guatemala City. When we were there Mazzantini, the

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great Spanish bull-fighter, gave several performances. He made the trip on the same steamer that my family and I took from Salina Cruz, Mexico, to San José, Guatemala. In that way we met him and liked him very much. He was not of the ordinary class, like most bull-fighters, but belonged to a well-known Spanish family, and was well educated and refined. When he was a boy he took such a liking to this sport of "torero," that he followed it as a profession. I know that upon his return to Spain, his wife having died, he left off bull-fighting and was elected a member of the Common Council of Madrid.

Beautiful gowns and hats are seen at these bull-fights. The young ladies that are selected to be queens wore the Spanish "mantilla" (white or black Spanish lace) over their heads, becomingly arranged with bright flowers and high combs. The Indian girls wear their best, brilliant shawls of all colors, some of

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these having long fringe and embroidery. All this adds greatly to the spectacle along the streets, thronged with gayety and life, leading to the bull-ring, which I enjoyed seeing, though I am not a partisan of that sport.

It is sad to relate that very recently Guatemala City was nearly all destroyed by terrible earthquakes, so that I shall never again see it as I remember it.

Our trip back from Guatemala to Mexico (during our first stay in that country) was just before the railroad was put in operation, so after arriving at Manzanillo, one of Mexico's ports, having been traveling about five days on a steamer, we had to go by land, two days on muleback and one by stage-coach, until we reached Guadalajara. It was a very interesting but trying trip, as at four o'clock before daybreak, we had to start on muleback or by stage-coach, and make many changes and rest at various towns or small villages, some not having a hotel but

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only lodging-houses, where we ate, or stayed for the night.

Those roads through mountains, hills and precipices have wonderful scenery, with dense vegetation, mountains, etc., also snow-covered peaks, but it was rather a dangerous journey, although the mules are well acquainted with the roads and are sure-footed. Nevertheless it frightened us at times; the roads were so narrow that only two mules or horses could go abreast, or pass each other, going or coming. Each of us children, the younger ones, had a guide, who rode behind on the same mule with each one, to hold us on, but my father, mother, and older brothers went alone, with the guide near at hand. These mules always insist on going as close to the edge of the precipices as possible, making one nervous and uneasy.

Some of the precipices and hills have queer names, one of them being called "La Llorona" (The Weeping Woman),

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which some say has been applied to it on account of the legend to which I have referred and which served to scare children and even ignorant adults, while others assert that it is so designated because most women who ride through that narrow path get so scared that sometimes they even weep through fear.

One of these days we were traveling on the stage-coach, and being bounced and knocked about for many hours, and should have reached a certain village before dark, but somehow our driver took the wrong path and we lost our guides. At that time they always went armed, because there had been cases of attacks by robbers, and these guides of course knew the roads perfectly well. It was night already and still we wandered about to find the right road, we children thinking that we were in danger of being robbed or killed in those dark places, and no one could defend us, as all were unarmed. Finally we met the guides,

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who also were looking everywhere for our stage-coach, and they in turn with matches and lighted papers, as best as they could, found the much-desired road and directed our driver. We reached the town shortly afterwards, much to our delight, after having passed anxious and trying hours of suspense and fear, and also being well worn out.

When we reached Guadalajara we found the city gayly decorated, owing to the festivities that then took place on account of the opening of a railroad. President Diaz was there with his cabinet, and the celebrations were very elaborate. Being very small I remember hardly anything of what took place. From Guadalajara we took a train to Mexico City, and after staying a few days there we left by rail for Washington, where my father had been sent as First Secretary of the Mexican Legation, which afterwards became an Embassy.

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CHAPTER XIV

RESIDING AND STUDYING IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

Most of my education was acquired by private teachers at home, in Mexico, Guatemala, and the United States, but I also went several years to a convent in Washington. When we arrived in this city I was a little girl and spoke only Spanish, but soon, as children do, learned to speak English.

At first I had a private teacher at home who taught me English, and piano, going afterwards as a day scholar to the Academy of the Visitation on Connecticut Avenue. The nuns were very kind to me, but at first I was rather timid and bashful, as this was my first experience away from home. When I was called to read or say my lessons aloud it made me

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quite nervous, because I thought that, being a foreigner, my pronunciation was not correct and that the girls inwardly made fun of me. I am glad to say that this was not the case, and in a short time I liked the convent very much, and made many friends among the girls. On our way home from school we always bought things to eat, as most children do, but strange to say I would buy pop-corn, potato chips, and pickles, which I preferred. This amused the other girls, who, of course, liked candies best.

Two years before entering the convent a great event took place; my sister was born. I had three older brothers and two younger ones, the third having died when a baby in Mexico City. Two of my brothers and I were down with the mumps when my little sister was born, so I was unable to see her until two weeks later, much to my displeasure, as I was anxious to see this tiny baby, who I thought would be my real baby doll,

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the preferred one. She was christened at home and named after my mother Adela, the Mexican Ambassador being her godfather. I can remember the pretty silver cup and white enameled rocking-chair he gave her, also all about the ceremony and party afterwards, and how grown-up I felt, because I was allowed to be present.

In those days the bicycle was very popular and in great demand. I of course had one and rode on it to school nearly every day, enjoying it immensely, but one day when the ground was covered with snow, I was going at high speed, as it was very late, and carried many books and my lunch-box, all very tightly tied to the handle of my bicycle. Suddenly they began to slip away, and books and lunch-box fell to the snow-covered ground in all directions, much to my dismay and anger. I assure you that it was quite a task to pick them up, clean off the snow, and tie again to the

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bicycle. More than that, I could not reach school on time, but got there several minutes late.

Among my schoolmates was Belen Azpiroz, daughter of the Mexican Ambassador and godfather to my sister. With her I used to recall the pleasant times we had in our own country. I also remember how interested I was whenever in my class of geography or history reference was made to Mexico.

Washington is a very beautiful city, like a huge park in summer, trees in every street and lovely parks or squares for the children to play in. It somewhat reminds one of Mexico City, that is of the new residential sections or "colonias." How we children used to love to go to the Zoological or Rock Creek Park, and on Easter Monday to go to roll eggs on the White House lawn. We lived at that time on Fifteenth Street and our house had two nice porches and a swing on the lawn, painted green, where we

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played and swung ourselves to our hearts' content. I always enjoy going back to Washington, having very pleasant recollections of our various stays in that city, and also it is nice to see again my school friends and other friends made there in later years.

As I said before, we went back to San Francisco, California, several times and during one of our visits there, we took a house in Oakland across the bay. I can say very little about our residence in that city as I was yet quite young, but I remember among other things that a Mexican military band, that was giving concerts in San Francisco, came to serenade my father, who was then in charge of the Mexican Consulate General in that city. At that time Juventino Rosas' "Sobre las Olas," one of the best waltzes written and the work of a Mexican composer, was in the height of its popularity, and whenever the band played it, the applause was deafening.

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I have always been fond of music, and even when a little girl I used to listen with delight to the playing of the Mexican military bands, which I may say are very good, as also to what are called the "typical" orchestras, made up of guitars, mandolins, and other odd stringed instruments. The best of these orchestras was led by Lerdo de Tejada, a Mexican composer, whose "Perjura" and other songs, "danzas," and pieces have become very popular in the United States. His orchestra and several Mexican military bands have visited this country on different occasions, and they have always been enthusiastically received by the music-loving public.

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CHAPTER XV

THE LAUNCHING OF MEXICAN WAR-SHIPS

Two Mexican war-ships (twin ships) were built in the American Crescent Shipyard at Elizabeth, N. J.; the *Vera Cruz* and the *Tampico.*

At that time my father was Chargé d'Affaires at Washington, D. C., so he was asked to have one of his daughters christen either of the ships. I was still a very young girl with short dresses, but was the lucky and fortunate one to be chosen, as I was the eldest girl, to be one of the sponsors. The other was Mrs. Lewis Nixon, wife of the naval constructor.

It was a bright sunny day in September when my family and I boarded a large steam launch in New York City's harbor for Elizabethport, N. J.

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This eventful occasion in my life thrilled me greatly, and I can well remember this interesting day most vividly. On arriving at our destination, we were met by the American and Mexican officials and were escorted to the temporary platform, erected close to the bow of the ship that I was to christen, this one being the *Vera Cruz*. There I was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers and with a champagne bottle, all done up in a gilt net bag with green, white, and red ribbon streamers, our national colors. On each ribbon there was written in gilt letters the name of ship, date, place, and name of the "madrina" (sponsor). With this elaborate bottle I was to christen the war-ship. I was instructed to break the bottle on the prow of the ship and say, just as it was slipping away, "I christen thee *Vera Cruz*." I also was reminded that if the ship should get away without this being done, just at the right moment, it would be launched un-

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christened. I was slightly uneasy and nervous as to my ability to do the right thing at the right time, as every one's attention was directed at me.

All went off very nicely, and the bottle broke in many pieces. The *Vera Cruz* slipped away into the sea, and in like manner the *Tampico*, this last one being christened, as I said before, by Mrs. Nixon, amid applause, roar of cannons, shouting, and the playing of patriotic airs of both countries by the band. It was a wonderful sight as thousands witnessed these two ceremonies. The shipyard was profusely decorated with flags and national colors, which were waving to and fro by the breeze. I still keep the champagne bottle in many pieces, which are held by the gilt net bag, as a remembrance of this pleasant and interesting occasion.

After the launching of the two ships, we were invited to a banquet and reception. The building where these social

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functions took place was tastefully ornamented with flags, flowers, and plants.

The celebrations having terminated, we returned again to New York City on the steam launch, and from there took a train to Bay Shore, L. I., where we had a cottage and were spending the summer months.

Afterwards on one of my return trips to Mexico, while passing the port of Vera Cruz, I had the pleasure of visiting the war-ship *Vera Cruz*, which I had christened and that was anchored at that harbor, and I was happy to know that several of the officers had kindly remembered the " madrina " of the vessel.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE BUFFALO EXPOSITION. PRESIDENT MCKINLEY'S ASSASSINATION

My father was sent to the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo, N. Y., from Washington, as one of Mexico's representatives.

We took a house in that lovely and attractive city and remained there about three months, going frequently to the Exposition and sometimes we stayed in the grounds all day long.

My delight was to go to the Exposition and visit the different buildings, and add to my collection badges, pamphlets, coins, samples, and imitations of various articles on exhibition there, which were given away to the people and children. Of course the greatest desire of us chil-

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dren was to go to the "Midway," where all the amusements were. I remember especially "The Trip to the Moon," "The House Upside Down," and the Streets of Cairo; there I rode on the backs of a camel and elephant, being almost shaken to pieces, but nevertheless enjoying it very much.

It was a very fine exposition and the illuminations were splendid; they say that owing to the great power obtained from Niagara Falls it had one of the best electrical displays ever had in any exposition.

Our trip to Niagara Falls was a very interesting one and we were able to admire those wonderful waterfalls, the greatest in the world, from both the American and Canadian sides. We still have a photograph taken there. It looks as if the whole family, my mother, father, brothers and I, were standing on one of the falls; a scheme the photographers have of combining both pic-

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tures, the Falls and the group, to make it appear that way.

The assassination of President McKinley was a tragic and sad event. My parents related to me how pleasantly they had spent with him that day at an excursion and luncheon at Niagara Falls. All the officials, American and Latin-American, were invited, as were also President and Mrs. McKinley. They both were in a happy and cheerful mood, mingling and chatting most amiably with the other guests.

On returning to Buffalo and the Exposition, the party dispersed. My father then went home for us children to take us to join my mother, who had remained with friends in the Mexican building. To our great horror and regret on entering the grounds in a carriage, as that day carriages were permitted inside the grounds for the invited guests, we were told at the gate that an attempt had been made on the life of President

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McKinley and that he was severely wounded. At that moment we began to hear shouts, screams of "Lynch him!" and the excitement of the people was intense. Just then a carriage passed us at high speed, in which the assassin Czolgosz was being taken to prison. President McKinley at the time of that cowardly attempt was holding a public reception and shaking hands with all at the Temple of Music. That tragedy upset us so much that we changed our plans and having met my mother, who also was very much impressed, sad and nervous, after having witnessed and heard the cries of "Lynch him!" and seen the carriage with the assassin, that we returned home, instead of remaining the rest of the day. Though very young then, the terrible event impressed me very much, especially as I noticed how everybody felt so sad, not only on account of the dastardly deed, but because President McKinley died a few

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days later. He was so very kind and deservedly popular.

Mexico had a very important part in the Exposition, having an administration building and exhibits in all the various departments and buildings. These exhibits were very attractive and interesting, and drew the attention of thousands of visitors. That they were duly appreciated, is shown by its many prizes that Mexican exhibitors received at the Exposition. Furthermore it sent a military band, which gave concerts that were very popular. I well remember how the people applauded when the "Paloma" and other typical pieces, that are popular in the United States, were played by the band. Whenever I went into Mexico Building and saw so many things made in my country, it seemed, at times, as if I were back again in my native land.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE SECOND PAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

THE Second Pan-American Conference took place in Mexico City in the winter of 1901–1902.

At that time I was still a little girl, but can recall most vividly some of the happenings of this important conference, while we were stopping at the Hotel Iturbide. This was Emperor Iturbide's residence, converted into a hotel many years ago. It is a very large massive building of old Spanish architecture, four stories high, with five interior "patios" (courtyards), and three different entrances. The principal entrance is on San Francisco Street, the leading business street of Mexico City, and the other entrances are

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on San Juan de Letran and Coliseo Viejo Streets.

Many of the Pan-American delegates were staying at this hotel, and as my father was connected with the Mexican delegation, I met them all and became friends of their children, as most of them brought their families. Among the delegates were many that were Ministers from various Latin-American countries to the United States and living in Washington at the time when we were there, so of course we already knew them, and it was a pleasure to see them again and live in the same hotel. With these children I used to play all kinds of games, hide-and-go-seek and tag, through the many long halls and corridors of the hotel.

Great excitement prevailed among us children and even among the curious older persons on the days that these diplomats and delegates were received by President Porfirio Diaz. Presidential

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carriages came for them, entering the principal "patio," where it was a rare occurrence for any carriages to be allowed. The Introducer of Ambassadors came for these distinguished men. They wore their brilliant uniforms with gold lace and embroidery, and plumes on their hats. After entering the different carriages they departed in great pomp, we of course anxiously awaiting their return.

Another memorable day, but not such a pleasant one, was my first experience with an earthquake shock, which was a very severe one and during the Pan-American Conference.

Several girl friends and I were watching from a second-story balcony of the interior court-yard of the hotel the digging of a well. One of the workmen was climbing up a high ladder, when suddenly it began to shake and we began to feel a dizzy sensation. Some one shouted "Un temblor!" (an earthquake). We became very frightened and ran as

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fast as we could to our rooms and mothers. I remember so well how unsteady and dizzy I felt going up the flight of stairs, and was met by many an anxious face, and also by my mother who was looking about for my brothers and me.

The scenes on the streets during an earthquake were quite impressive, as many Indians knelt and prayed. As Mexico City is built on a lake, it is said that the shocks of earthquakes, even though severe, cannot be so destructive as in other cities that are built on more solid land. On this account the construction of buildings is a difficult task, as not many feet below is water, and the foundations have to be very solid, or in a few years the building or structure, if very high or massive, begins to sink slightly but perceptibly.

My parents gave several entertainments to some of the delegates and Mexican friends. One of these evenings several poets and writers of different

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nationalities were present and each of them recited or read one of his compositions. Among them was Juan de Dios Peza, a most renowned and popular Mexican poet. I used to love to read the book which he dedicated to his home and children, recalling the verses "Fusiles y Muñecas" (Guns and Dolls) in which he describes his children at play, and their favorite aims and amusements. He died only a few years ago, much to the regret of his numerous admirers and appreciative readers of his heartfelt, simply worded, and attractive styled poetry.

The Pan-American delegates were taken by the government for excursions around the outskirts of the capital, and to many of the cities in the interior of the Republic; as I was too small to go, I am unable to describe any of these interesting and enjoyable trips. I do remember that many of the factories, from all over the country, sent samples to the foreign delegates, and recall especially

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the large assortment of materials (some samples of several yards in length), in cotton, woolen, and silk of various colors, designs, and textures, all made by Mexican factories and which could compare with those made in the United States and elsewhere. Of course we children were very much interested in these samples, as our mothers gave us the smaller pieces for dolls' dresses.

Clothes and dresses are made from these materials, although a great deal is also imported from Europe and the United States.

Some persons unacquainted with life in Mexico and judging merely from many illustrations contained in the papers or scenes depicted in the "movies," may get the idea, an erroneous one, indeed, that children in Mexico go barefooted, that they are poorly clad and fed. Such may be the case with reference to the children of the poorer and lower classes, or the Indians, the same thing to

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be seen in other countries although it may be more noticeable in Mexico on account of the comparatively larger number of Indians to be found there.

Children and adults of the middle and well-to-do classes dress somewhat like those of the same rank in the United States, there being a tendency to adopt in some degree the fashions used in France and Spain. I do not mean the "mantilla," Spanish fancy dress, or "torero" suits, which many believe Latin-Americans usually wear on the streets and homes, but the same styles worn in the United States and in European cities.

The Indian women and girls of the lower classes and servant girls do dress differently. They wear no hats but use a typical scarf called "rebozo." Those of finer hand-made workmanship in silk fabrics, for instance, are used by ladies and girls in their city homes or when residing in the country. Some of these

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are so finely woven and of such delicate texture that they can be easily drawn through a ring.

The Indian men and boys wear the typical hat, "sombrero," with a high peak and wide brim; the poorer ones instead of shoes use sandals, and most of them, when cold, in place of overcoats use a "sarape." This is a wide piece of cloth in woolen, hand-made in bright or dull colors with stripes or other designs. These "sarapes" have generally an opening through which to pass the head, and others wear them as large scarfs over the shoulders. Foreigners greatly admire them and many buy them for table covers, curtains, or draperies. Some of the "sombreros" are made of felt and are embroideried with silver and gold ornaments, which render them quite expensive. Sometimes young boys use these finely trimmed "sombreros" when going out on horseback, but I must say that this custom is fast passing away.

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The "Rurales" wear "sombreros" like these and their uniforms or suits fit them very tightly. These consist of a short jacket and very tightly fitting trousers made of doeskin, and are also heavily embroidered in silver or gold, similar to the "sombreros," and some of them cost a great deal and look most attractive.

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CHAPTER XVIII

IN HABANA

I HAD just made my début at Washington, D. C., and was having a most delightful time going around to all the débutante parties, and grand receptions at the White House, Embassies, Legations, etc., when my father was transferred to Habana, as Mexican Minister to Cuba.

We were very cordially received by that government. We took a house at Vedado, a residential suburb of Habana, on Calle (Street) 17, the same house that the former Minister had. At first I missed very much my friends and Washington, but soon began to like that attractive and lively city, and become acquainted with some charming Cuban people, old and young.

Soon after our arrival there, two Mexi-

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can war-ships, the *Zaragoza* and the *Yucatan*, came to that port. It was a great pleasure, and I always felt very thrilled and happy whenever I visited those ships, as I was then, if only for a short time, on Mexican soil, and among my countrymen. We entertained the officers and they in return gave a party and dance on board to us and to the Cuban society. It was my first experience in attending a dance on board a war-ship, so I enjoyed it all the more. The bands played several patriotic airs, Mexican danzas and songs, the ships being gaily decorated with many flags. I still have a photograph taken on one of those occasions, on board the *Zaragoza*, and the group of all the invited guests. One of the officers gave me a button from his uniform, which I have had mounted as a hat-pin.

We lived in four different houses while in Habana, as we made several trips to Mexico and the United States, staying

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away a few months during the summer, which is quite warm, and also for more than a year in Washington again, my father having been sent there temporarily. The house I liked best, because of the beautiful view from its balconies, was one on the Malecon, or driveway along the ocean and not many blocks away from Miramar Hotel, and band-stand, just at the entrance to the harbor. Habana's port is a very busy and important one, merchant vessels, passenger and freight steamers of all kinds entering and leaving. We could see from our balconies the ships arriving and departing, and I remember how keenly we watched to see the entrance of the steamers coming from Vera Cruz, and more so if relatives or friends were coming. One could almost distinguish with telescopes from our balconies the people we knew on board, as they passed our house, although at quite a distance.

The sunsets are wonderful, reflecting

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the many colors on the sea waves, and when the sea was very rough or the tide high, the waves would splash all over the Malecon, and even on our balconies we could feel the salt water. A few times that drive and houses along it have been inundated during a cyclone or very high tide. We never witnessed a very severe one but nevertheless we saw a very heavy wind-storm. The waves were wonderful to see, rising very high and splashing in all directions, and at the Morro Castle, just at the entrance to the harbor, the waves would reach the tower. The Malecon is also a very lively place in the afternoons, especially on Sundays and during Carnival, as it is part of the principal drive for the numerous automobiles and carriages. All the balconies of the houses along there are also filled with the residents and their friends.

During the winter months Habana is filled with tourists, mostly coming from the United States, and at times they even

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find it difficult to get good accommodations at the hotels, so of course the city is even livelier at that time of the year. In summer many of the Cuban families go to spend a few months in the United States; it was during that period that we also made our trips to Mexico and the States, as Habana is an ideal spot for a winter resort for those who do not like the cold weather.

We were constantly meeting and seeing Mexican friends and acquaintances, who passed by that port. We generally went to meet them and enjoyed taking them around sight-seeing. The large steamers at that time did not anchor at the piers, but at a short distance inside the harbor or bay. Whenever we went to meet or leave our friends, we would go to the steamer in a steam-launch, as every one does. The ships generally arrive very early in the morning, and they are soon surrounded by numerous little boats and launches.

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CHAPTER XIX

THE MEXICAN CENTENNIAL

From Habana, we went to Mexico by steamer to Vera Cruz, and then by that interesting and beautiful road by rail to the capital, to witness the celebration of the Mexican Centennial in 1910. We remained about three months at Mexico City, most pleasant and memorable ones for us; and especially for me those months were very enjoyable, because I was then in my teens and allowed to go to all parties, even the most ceremonious ones.

The whole month of September was devoted to the celebration of Mexico's centennial. On the sixteenth of that month was the anniversary of one hundred

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years of independence, as a free and prosperous Republic.

My father, who was Mexican Minister to Cuba at that time, was also named to assist with the Mexican delegation, and my mother and I were asked to attend to the wives and daughters of the foreign delegates. Many of the ladies of Mexico City's leading families were designated to assist in entertaining these ladies, several being assigned to each delegation.

Every country in the world sent delegates, sometimes consisting of several members and secretaries, also some nations sent a war-ship to a Mexican port, the marines landing and going to the capital to be guests of Mexico and take part in the parades. The United States sent a numerous delegation of distinguished men, who took their wives. Among the American delegates were Senator Overman, Representative and Mrs. James L. Slayden, Representative and Mrs. Fairchild, Mr. Curtis Guild,

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who was afterwards American Ambassador to Russia and died recently, and Mr. James W. Gerard, later Ambassador to Germany, and Mrs. Gerard. I had the honor at a large banquet to be next to Mr. Gerard at the dinner-table, and have his signature on my menu, as I then asked those around me to sign their names. I have quite a collection of menus, and programmes of nearly all the dinners, luncheons, and dances I have attended, also many clippings that speak of those celebrations, and of my family and myself, as souvenirs of years gone by.

All the foreign guests were hospitably received by the government and some of the best homes in Mexico City were placed at their disposal, where they lived in comfort and luxury, everything being provided for them by the Mexican government.

Mrs. Diaz, wife of the President, gave a beautiful garden party at Chapultepec castle, which was profusely decorated and

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illuminated for that occasion. A platform had been erected in one of the halls, where over fifty young ladies and young men of Mexico's élite gave a concert, the instruments used being mandolins, guitars, and harps. Then others danced dressed in Indian costumes of bright colors and rich materials the typical dances, as the "Jarabe," and also in Spanish costumes the "Jota" and "Sevillanas." Afterwards the military band played, and we all danced until a late hour and also had a very delicious supper.

At the National Palace a grand ball was given, the largest I have ever attended. The principal interior courtyard was transformed into a superb and immense ball-room, which must have cost a very high sum, as a complete floor and a ceiling supported by iron columns had to be constructed. The floor was covered with canvas and the large pillars, stone and iron ones, with winding draperies, and there were thousands of

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electric lights on the ceiling, walls, pillars, and everywhere.

The rooms opening into that court-yard on the first floor were furnished in the styles of Louis XIV and Louis XV, and there the guests could rest between dances. Over ten thousand persons attended this beautiful ball. The foreign and Mexican delegates, diplomats, and officers of war and navy wore uniforms, adding to the brilliancy of that wonderful scene. At one end there was an elevated platform for the orchestra of about one hundred and fifty musicians. I shall never forget that ball and how very much I danced and enjoyed myself. We returned home with my parents about four o'clock, and still it was going on. I believe it ended near six or seven in the morning. Other balls and receptions were given, one at the Municipal Palace and another at the Department of Foreign Relations. Those although not as large were also very grand and at-

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tractive. Of course it was easier for my partners to find me at those affairs, as the ball-rooms were smaller and there were fewer people.

Through the whole month of September during the celebrations, all the principal business streets were decorated and illuminated artistically and elaborately, as well as all the public buildings, Cathedral, many stores, etc. At night those streets were crowded, and concerts and moving pictures in the open air and at the parks were given free for the public. We were staying at the Hotel Iturbide, the one I described in one of the former chapters, and where we usually stayed whenever we visited Mexico City for a short time. The location of that hotel on San Francisco Street, the principal thoroughfare for the crowds, and parades, made it most enjoyable for us, as we could see from our balconies all the excitement and interesting scenes, although most of the parades we witnessed

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from the National Palace balconies, all the officials and foreign guests being invited there on those occasions. The President always reviewed the parades from one of those balconies.

The most picturesque and typical parade was a historical one, representing the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés and party, as well as Montezuma, the Aztec Emperor, surrounded by his courtiers and countrymen following him. Thousands of Indians were brought from all over the country to take part, and each wore the typical Indian costume of those days, most elaborate in bright colors, some wearing feathers in their heads and carrying banners and their antique weapons. The women wore also the typical costume of bright colors and many strings of beads in all colors around their necks. As that parade reached the National Palace they stopped before the President's balcony, and began to perform and represent portions of the

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historical episodes during the conquest of Mexico. It was indeed a beautiful, interesting, and unique sight.

Another elaborate festivity given was a garden party at the Automobile Club, a fashionable one and located at Chapultepec near the lake. The Club, and surrounding grounds were ornamented, and illuminated with hundreds of electric lights among the trees, bushes, and plants, and here and there tents were placed, having inside tables with all good things to eat for the invited guests, who ran into the thousands. The lake looked like fairy-land, and wonderful fireworks, showing the burning of castles, figures and a bombardment and destruction of two battle-ships on this lake were enacted, illuminating the sky and surroundings as if all were in a blaze and burning up. The driveways, roads, and lawns near the Automobile Club were thronged by the multitudes of non-invited guests, rich and poor, young and

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old. It took us a very long time to reach the Club, as so many people had been invited, and although excellent arrangements had been made for automobiles and carriages to follow each other by specified roads, policemen being stationed at various points to indicate the way, it seemed slow and never-ending, but after having witnessed that lovely scene, it was worth while going through that apparently endless route.

President Porfirio Diaz entertained at two large banquets in honor of all the foreign delegates. On the night that the last one was given, all the invited guests went to a theatrical performance given in their honor at one of the leading theatres. The entire balcony of the theatre was turned into one continuous box, where the most prominent delegates were seated. They wore their brilliant uniforms and the ladies were in full evening dress. All this was an added attraction, as seldom so many different uniforms, of all

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nations, have been seen at a theatrical performance. The theatre was splendidly decorated with flags of all countries and flowers, and brighty illuminated.

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CHAPTER XX

MEXICAN HOME LIFE. RETURN TO WASHINGTON

After the Mexican Centennial we all went back to Habana, as my father returned there to his post. Soon after our arrival my father was commissioned to thank the Cuban government for having sent a delegation to our Centennial celebrations. The Secretary of State gave in his honor a large and beautiful banquet, about one hundred and fifty persons attending, officials, diplomats and Cuban society, so in return my father gave another banquet at Miramar Hotel to thank the government for their courtesy. The large dining-room was decorated with flags of Cuba and Mexico and colors of both countries, and the table was profusely ornamented with flowers in our

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colors, green, white and red, and at each place a menu with the Cuban and Mexican flags painted in one corner. After dinner we went in to the gardens and had coffee at small tables, the orchestra playing patriotic airs of both countries, and at the same time there were moving pictures, as it was usual to have attractive films during dinner parties or refreshments served to the numerous persons who often go to that attractive garden. That evening they showed some interesting views of Mexico and a few of the Centennial celebrations, which we had so recently personally witnessed.

Perhaps before terminating this little book, it would be proper for me to say something about Mexican home life, such as I remember when I was a little girl in my country. Children there were very respectful and affectionate to their parents; the family ties were very close, and the young people seemed to love their

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homes. The respect shown by the young to their parents continued even when more advanced in years, and it was a usual thing to see men and women kiss the hands of their father or mother, when entering a room, and always embracing and kissing them when retiring at night.

Mexican children were not very independent, pushing, or self-reliant but at the same time they were affectionate, considerate, and obliging. From their earliest years they showed a love of home and of home life that is commendable. Rarely would one hear of Mexican children running away from home or leaving their parents to seek a fortune, adventure, or position away from them.

Of course girls in Mexico devote most of their time to household duties and aid their mothers in the discharge of such duties, and although they went to school or studied at home, they did not learn things that would fit them for an active or independent career, but instead out-

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side of the usual studies, they took piano, singing, and painting lessons and also learned sewing, embroidery and other womanly accomplishments. A few that wished to support themselves or aid at home became teachers, but it is only lately that any have studied to become clerks or stenographers.

As during my younger days servants were plentiful and cheap, few girls had to devote their time to household drudgery, such as cooking, washing, or scrubbing.

There is a great deal of musical taste in Mexico and children there love piano-playing and singing, and girls, especially, begin to study the piano and other instruments when very small, and often become very good musicians. In my time girls used to see and visit each other quite often and become good and fast friends, but they seldom formed societies or clubs, as they do in the United States, but I hear that they do so now in my country, too.

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As is well known, girls in Mexico, and in nearly every Latin-American country, are not allowed to go out alone with young men, the custom being that their parents or a chaperone or one of their brothers should also go, but as customs are being modernized all over the world, at present there is more liberty; you often see a group of girls and young men go out together, without a chaperone.

Young people are very fond of dancing, and the dances that become popular in Europe and the United States very soon find their way to Mexico, and so I hear that now the fox-trot and one-step are as popular in my country as here, though of course the last time I was in Mexico the waltz and two-step were then the rage. I always have preferred the old-fashioned waltz, although I must say that dancing is one of my weaknesses, so I enjoy almost any dance.

There are a great variety of sweetmeats in Mexico, specialties of the country, and

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of course the children are very fond of them, like young people in this country. Our typical cooking is also very good and very different from American cooking; the "enchiladas," "tamales," and "tortillas" are decidedly popular there and even foreigners likewise become fond of such spicy dishes. I notice that now many like them in the United States and I know of several restaurants where Mexican cooking is served.

Men smoke a good deal, the Mexican tobacco being considered very good. The boys begin to smoke at an early age, but it is not practised by the girls or ladies, as many are apt to suppose. Some old ladies used to smoke but no young girl or lady of refinement would be addicted to this habit.

The women and children dress very stylishly, following the fashions that come from Europe, principally Paris, and also many from the United States, but some of the middle classes wear no hats

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but shawls or "rebozos." The Indian woman or girl wear their hair in braids down their backs and also use the "rebozo" (a long narrow shawl with fringe at both ends); those "rebozos" are generally in dark colors, some in stripes, and their best is usually made of silk.

After staying a few months in Habana we finally came again to Washington to reside in the United States, a country that I admire so much and in whose people I feel such great interest. However, those feelings can never diminish the love I have for my native country, the land where my parents were born, my beloved and dear Mexico.

THE END

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